

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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CINCEUR VAIHINGEN

USNMR SHAPE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USLOSACLANT NORVA

CINCLANT

S E C R E T BONN 18909

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, NATO, GW

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF NPG

REF: USNATO 6677

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY FEELS THAT REFTEL PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT ASSESSMENT OF HOW THE NPG SERVES U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS. IN PARTICULAR IT PROPERLY HIGHLIGHTS THE GREAT IMPORTANCE WHICH -THE FRG ATTACHES TO THE NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP. END SUMMARY

1. IN A RECENT INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS, COLONEL ALTENBURG, WHO IS THE NPG SPECIALIST IN THE FMOD, WAS ASKED ABOUT HIS VIEWS OF THAT ORGANIZATION. HE SHOWED NO HESITATION IN EXPRESSING THEM AND SAID THAT THESE VIEWS WERE NOT ONLY HIS OWN, BUT ALSO THOSE OF THE FMOD AS A WHOLE AND OF MINISTER LEBER PERSONALLY. AS FAR AS THE FRG WAS CONCERNED, THE NPG WAS AN "INDISPENSABLE PART OF NATO."

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2.-ALTENBURG SAID THAT THE NPG'S ROLE AS A MEANS OF EXCHANGING INFORMATION WITH NON-NUCLEAR POWERS WAS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. WHILE IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE U.S. TO PASS ON THE SAME SORT OF INFORMATION TO THE FRG BILATERALLY, SUCH CONSULTATIONS WOULD NOT PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE SUBSTITUTION FOR THE NPG. IT WAS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE FOR GERMAN PUBLIC OPINION THAT NUCLEAR QUESTIONS SHOULD BE PRESENTED AS AN ALLIANCE RATHER THAN AS A US-FRG MATTER. WHENEVER QUESTIONS WERE RAISED WITHIN GERMANY ABOUT THE PROPRIETY OR DESIRABILITY OF STATIONING U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON FRG SOIL, REFERENCE TO THE NPG ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND FORCEFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY. BY EMPHASIZING THAT NUCLEAR PLANNING WAS A MATTER FOR THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE TO CONSIDER AND THAT THE FRG PARTICIPATED FULLY IN SUCH PLANNING THROUGH ITS PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE NPG, DOUBTS WERE SET TO REST IN A MANNER WHICH NO REFERENCE TO A POSSIBLE BILATERAL AGREEMENT COULD EQUAL.

3.- ALTENBURG, WHO HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ESTABLISHING THE FRG'S POSITION CONCERNING THE POST-PONEMENT OF THE NOVEMBER NPG MEETING AS WELL AS ITS POSITION CONCERNING WHO SHOULD HOST THE SPRING 1975 SESSION, STATED THAT HE FELT TWICE YEARLY MEETINGS WERE ABOUT THE RIGHT FREQUENCY. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED IF HE FELT THAT ADEQUATE USE WAS BEING MADE OF THE NPG PERMREPS, -ALTENBURG STATED THAT HE FELT THAT THEY COULD DO MORE. FOR THIS VERY REASON, THE FRG HAD JUST APPOINTED A NEW NPG PERMREP, AN OFFICER WHO IT FELT WOULD PLAY A MORE POSITIVE AND ACTIVE ROLE THAN HAD HITHERTO BEEN THE CASE.

4. EMBOFF-EMPHASIZED THAT HIS DISCUSSION OF NPG WAS- IN ORDER TO EDUCATE HIMSELF ON FRG VIEWS AND THAT HE WAS NOT ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS.
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